

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) POLICY

November 2020

INTRODUCTION

The knowledge and skills needed to function effectively as a chartered secretary or governance professional, in business, education, professional practice, the public sector or any other environment, continue to change and expand at a rapid rate. Members and GradCGs face increased knowledge and skills expectations. Continued development of professional competence and lifelong learning are critical if members are to meet these expectations.

The marketing of chartered secretaries and governance professionals has increasingly emphasised the internationally moderated CGI qualifying scheme, disciplinary structures, accountability and a **formal, monitored continuing professional development (CPD) programme.**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) refers to learning activities that develop and maintain capabilities to enable members to perform competently within their professional environments.

The Chartered Governance Institute of Southern Africa (CGISA) is a division of The Chartered Governance Institute (CGI) and, as such, it has obligations to foster a commitment to lifelong learning amongst its members. It is also required to monitor and enforce the continuing development and maintenance of professional competence of its members. These obligations also flow from stakeholder expectations and regulatory requirements within South Africa such as SAQA and SARS.

The CGISA's Code of Professional Conduct paragraph 1.9 states: *"Members shall ensure the currency of their knowledge, skills, and technical competence in relation to their professional activities. Failure to maintain currency of knowledge is regarded as professional misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the continuing professional development policy."*

The following are the main elements of the CPD policy:

- In keeping with our professionalism, each individual member will design his/her own CPD programme;
- Members will analyse their own career paths and establish their own professional development requirements;
- Each member will pursue a programme of CPD that will enable them to meet their own objectives and aims – their own developmental needs;
- As each career path, employment or professional practice requires fairly unique professional development interventions, so each programme will have its own unique interventions – which will differ from member to member.

The programme is compulsory for all Members and GradCGs and has to be reported on and monitored. Members will log the CPD activities they have undertaken to fulfil their CPD aims and objectives. It is geared to promote life-long-learning for all members in a constructive and creative way that is flexible, tailor-made for each individual and is focused on particular member and GradCG needs.

How exactly would this work? The following steps explain the process that each member would follow:

THE CPD PROCESS FOR ALL MEMBERS

All members irrespective of grade are recommended to follow these steps:

It is important to include how long each activity took. **The minimum amount of required CPD hours is 20 hours per annum which includes a maximum of 7 hours non-verifiable CPD.**

For all members who are Registered Tax Practitioners, at least 20 hours must be tax related. It is strongly recommended that further CPD be undertaken in other disciplines in which you practice.

Auditing and monitoring CPD

By recording your CPD online, you are both maintaining your own record, and reporting your CPD activity to the Institute. Your CPD records are available to the staff responsible for maintenance of the scheme, but not to other members. There is no need to submit supporting paper records (e.g. attendance certificates), but these should be retained in case they are required for auditing purposes.

Consideration of exceptions

The CPD programme is designed to accommodate changing working patterns throughout your professional life, and to take these into account. Such changes may make it difficult or impossible for you to meet the usual hour requirements of the scheme.

You may wish not to record CPD during periods of extended leave from normal work. (Extended leave might include parental leave, other forms of career break, sickness or accident recovery.)

If you are on the retired rate and no longer economically active, you are not required to do CPD. If you are on the retired rate and still economically active, you are required to do CPD.

If any of these circumstances apply to you, or if you wish your case to be considered as an exception for any other reason, you can contact the membership department. Exceptions will be assessed and permitted or otherwise by the Membership Committee.

- **Non-verifiable CPD**

Non-verifiable CPD is a learning activity which has taken place, but doesn't have a defined or specific learning outcome. This would include general reading of professional magazines e.g. Technical newsletter, *boardroom* or e-zine; following financial and business matters in print and media; and discussions with colleagues in an informal setting (for example, learning about developments in business or finance or informally through networking at a business event, etc.). Informal CPD involves activities you can undertake yourself. It may be difficult for a third party to evidence this type of CPD so you will need to keep your own records. **Non-verifiable CPD can make up a maximum of 7 hours per annum.**

- **Verifiable CPD**

Verifiable CPD involves participating in activities such as courses, webinars, seminars, workshops, updates, CGISA modules, conferences and panel/group meetings where you can provide evidence that the learning was relevant to your current or future career needs, and **you can prove that it took place.**

A wide range of courses and activities will be suitable for your CPD needs. Courses can be undertaken by face to face tuition, online or via other electronic forms of delivery.

In all circumstances, in order to include learning as verifiable CPD, the CGISA requires you to keep a record which clearly shows:

- How many CPD hours you are claiming for the activity;
- Proof that the learning took place.

Verifiable CPD does not only have to be about attending courses – an example of verifiable CPD is outlined below:

Writing a business report for your employer

In order to write a business paper, you might need to undertake 4 hours of research on the internet, learning in a subject area that is new to you, or where regulation has changed. You then write the report. The report is the evidence of your verifiable CPD. It shows that you have applied the learning you acquired. The research you undertook is the learning activity. For example, you will therefore have completed 4 hours of verifiable CPD.

Other ways in which you can pursue verifiable CPD are provided below (please remember that in all of these examples, there must be a learning outcome, i.e. a result of your learning activity):

- Reading technical updates or standards where there is a learning outcome (similar to the example above);
- Writing or giving a presentation *for the first time*;
- Using e-learning;
- Attendance certificate from courses or workshops;
- Research notes and final copy of technical or business articles;
- Notes of participation in discussion groups;
- Outputs or products from work, for example a business plan;
- Course/training certificates;
- Attendance registers at meetings, webinars and workshops;
- Third party attendance verification;
- Research papers;
- Strategy documents or presentations.

Many of the activities that you complete in the workplace can count towards your CPD requirement.

- Taking on new tasks, roles or responsibilities offers you an opportunity to develop your skills;
- Involvement in coaching or mentoring colleagues, or being coached or mentored yourself, will also develop new skills or maintain existing skills;
- You may sit on a committee or working party, or be part of an industry group or network (e.g. the Professional Practice Group (PPG). Note that simply being a member does not apply; active participation in such a group is required;
- Completing a piece of work which required you to learn new information can also count as CPD.

The CGISA will recognise any of these activities as CPD if they are relevant and contribute to your individual development and learning needs.

Important advice

Repetition of the same work will not contribute to further CPD hours. For example, you may give the same presentation on 4 different occasions. You will only be eligible to count the preparation work

completed for the first presentation as relevant CPD.

You are not restricted to the examples above. These illustrate some of the different types of learning activity which you could consider.

You should log your CPD hours as soon as possible after the event by recording the information on the website. If you are not able to record it on the website you can send it to the Membership Co-ordinator of the CGISA.

Keeping evidence

In all cases, no matter which route you are following, you are required to keep evidence for a three year period for the Institute's monitoring purposes. You are not required to send in your evidence when you log your CPD hours – you should keep this safe however, in case you are selected for CPD monitoring.

Non-compliance

The Board is committed to ensuring the CPD system will operate effectively and in the public interest. Therefore the Board will ensure that, when necessary, appropriate action is taken to ensure compliance with the CPD Policy. Steps will be taken where members do not comply with the CPD Policy. Initial steps taken to address non-compliance are likely to focus on bringing members into compliance within a reasonable time frame.

The Membership Committee is responsible for monitoring compliance with the CPD Policy. The Committee has a wide range of powers including:

- Refusing, restricting or withdrawing any licence it has issued;
- Agreeing a regulatory penalty;
- Referring the member to the Disciplinary Committee for possible disciplinary action.

It is important to be aware that continued or willful failure to comply could result in your being excluded from membership.

Monitoring

Monitoring will be conducted as follows:

- An audit of the website;
- An annual random audit of selected Members. The audit will require Members to provide evidence of their CPD activity and records will need to be kept for three years;
- By exception reports generated from the database.

Follow-up and consequences

In order for this to be meaningful and to add real value to what it means to be a professional, and specifically a chartered secretary or governance professional, the programme needs to be effective.

It is important to note that the practice and implementation of performance review is a mirror activity that could very easily be integrated into a CPD programme.

Members are expected to meet the requirements. Members found to be in breach of the requirements will at first be guided and encouraged to comply.

Members found to be in breach of the CPD requirements could be called to a disciplinary committee that would have the power to impose corrective measures, including suspension of Membership. This is to ensure we are able to continue to market chartered secretaries and governance professionals as being up-to-date with their professional requirements.

CONCLUSION

The CGISA cannot provide assurance that all members and GradCGs will provide high quality professional service all the time. Doing so involves more than monitoring professional competence, it would involve the application of that knowledge with professional judgement and an objective attitude. Similarly CGISA cannot be assured that every person who participates in a continuing professional development programme will reap the full benefits of that programme, because of variances in individual commitment and capacity to learn. Despite the inherent limitations however, the Board believes a continuing professional development programme is important for an individual member to fulfil his/her professional activities and responsibilities and the maintenance of professional standards, ethics and knowledge.